

Theology vol 77. 7.
O N

JACOB'S LADDER;

O R, T H E

PROTECTORSHIP of SION.

Being the Substance of a

DISCOURSE on GEN. xxviii. 12, 13.

Delivered in the Year of Our LORD 1654,

By FRANCIS RAWORTH. *K*

And now at the Request of many reprinted for the Benefit
of the rising Generation, by F. G.

Heb. xii. 4. — *And by it he being dead, yet speaketh.*

John v. 35. *He was a burning and shining Light.* —

“ With thee my Wants can never prove extreme,

“ With Jacob's Pillow, give me Jacob's Dream.”

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.LXII.

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To the READER.


IF thou art carnal, and a Stranger to the Paths of Sion, this ensuing Discourse will seem mere Foolishness to thee, for the Things therein contained are spiritually discerned; but if thou art one of God's Jacobs, I hope what is here presented to thee may be of some Use, through the Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Little did I ever think that the following Sermon would appear in publick View from me: I had indeed, at my leisure Hours, collected this out of the Author's Writings, with some Alteration, for my private Amusement: But having read the Manuscripts to severâl Christian Friends, and likewise lent them to some others, they were received with great Approbation: I was earnestly intreated to make them publick by committing them to Print; and having, I trust, through Grace, received some spiritual Advantage from reading them myself, I was not willing to be selfish, and so eat my Morsel alone. If any, who shall peruse the following Pages, should receive any spiritual Advantage, and are prevailed upon to mend their Pace in climbing the heavenly Ladder, let them give all the Praise to the God of Jacob: And pray for me, who propose thy peculiar Profit by the subsequent Discourse.

Mile-End, March 1762.

F. G.

TO THE
P R O F E S S O R S
O F T H E
Glorious Gospel of CHRIST.

My FRIENDS,

 F ever there was an Hour of Temptation, it is surely at this Day, when so few follow Christ; when so many stand still, and most go backward; when those that once would not have been hired to neglect a Duty, now think it their Duty not to pray at all; when those that have tasted much Sweetness in Gospel-Truths, should now cry out (as those ungrateful *Israelites* of old) What! have we nothing but this Manna? that have suffered much Reproach for Christ, should at present, in their Lives, be a Reproach to Christ; that formerly avoided the Appearance of Evil, and now condemn those as ignorant of their Liberty, who are afraid of Prophaneness.—Not long since it was familiarly said, There goes a Saint, there walks an Heir of Salvation, now are not known in the Streets; that there is little Difference between a Professor and an Apostate, between a Professor and a prophane Man, nay, between a Professor and a Persecutor. It is in this Age too remarkable, that some Professors of the Gospel are the great, if not the greatest Hindrances of the Profession of the Gospel.—For these many Years our Lord Jesus hath been burying the Designs of his more publick
A Adversaries

Adversaries under Ground; now God is coming to *Jerusalem* to purge his Gold, to prune his Vine. Professors, look within you, and look about you: Ah, Lord! what Blushing will there be 'ere long in *England*? When wilt thou wash off the Paint of our Profession, and that thy Followers shall wear their Hearts in their Faces? How much better shall a Dram of Grace be, than a Talent of Gifts? When as the greater our Lights and Links of Knowledge are, the more unawares we discover our Darknes. If we cannot endure the Spirit going up and down with a Candle and Lanthorn to search our Hearts, how can we abide the Day of Christ's Coming, and stand when the Sun of Righteousness shall appear, for he is like Refiner's Fire, and like Fuller's Soap? Justice, Humility, Repentance, tho' now they be but poor and low Things with Man, yet, when the Judge shall take the Bench more visibly, how high will they be with God? Sincerity, tho' it be a silent Grace at this Time, and dwells in Obscurity, 'ere long, I hope, will carry the Day, and bear away the Bell. —And certainly the King of *Sion* shall be as publick in his Glory, as ever he was in his Shame, his Deriders little considering, that while they willingly add to his Shame, they really, tho' unwillingly, add to his Glory; for as he was not crucified in a Corner, but at *Jerusalem*, the Eye and Center of the World, so he shall descend from Heaven in Majesty with Shouts, riding in the Clouds, as in his Chariot, attended by Millions of Angels and Saints, his Royal Favourites, all Eyes beholding of him, and every Knee bowing to him, *Jude* 14, 15. Woe be to the great Ones of this World then, when *Pilate*, that sat on the Bench,

Bench, shall stand at the Bar ; and our Lord Jesus, that once stood at the Bar, shall sit on the Bench (when we shall see not Persons, but Causes heard) ; the Judges being judged, and the Judged being Judges ; when Emperors and Kings shall be brought not in Chains of Gold about their Necks, but in Fetters of Iron about their Heels ; when the Peers, and Powers, and Potentates of the World shall hold down their Heads, and hold up their Hands, and cry Guilty ; when most of all the Mighty, and all the almost Almighty of the Earth, that have disrobed Christ of his Title, and robbed him of his Honour, shall be led up and down this Court (*q. d.* as *Tamerlane* led *Bajazet* in an iron Cage through *Asia*) to be gazed on, and hooted by all the Saints.—If that Headship that flattering Prelates in former Ages took from Jesus Christ, be yet taken from Christ, and given to Men in the Nations ; if Christ's Crown be pulled off his Head, no matter whose Head is warm in the World, *Mal.* iii. 15. iv. 1. And as for this Nation in special, my Prayers to the Lord are, that Holiness may not only have a Toleration, but Authority amongst us, against Licentiousness both of Judgment and Conversation, that the Rulers of *England* may not say, The Time is not come that the Lord's House should be built ; but rather hear God say, Is it Time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled Houses, and this House lie waste ? *Hag.* i.—For Shame, therefore, let Virgins arise, and either get Oil, or cast away their Lamps ; Security makes you incapable both of seeing your Reward, or doing your Work.

First, Think not, because you need but once to repent. Converted *David* (*q. d.*) must repent of
A 2 his

his Adultery before he be saved; Repentance is not only as Life to the Dead, but as Salve to the wounded Sinner; Repentance is as Vowels in the Alphabet, which we have not only need of to spell with while we are Babes, but to read withal when we are Men in Christ.

2dly, Plead for Opinions as Opinions, and for Graces as for Graces. I fear those that plead for disputable Opinions, as infallible Truths, will, 'ere long, hold vital and indisputable Truths as Conformity to the Gospel; true Faith in Christ, and Repentance towards God, but as failable and fallible Opinions. This is intolerable Folly, to see Men Slaves to Opinions, and Masters over Graces; if the Lord extinguish not this fond Zeal, the carnal World henceforward will take Advantage to think that Religion lies only in thinking and conceiving, and in the next Age conclude they are not to seek Religion in their Bibles, but in the Brains of Men. O Lord! how many are true to false Principles, and false to true Principles; and will rather die Martyrs for Error, than bow as Servants to Truth!

3dly, While you cry out against the old Superstition, beware of being tainted with the new Disease of this Age; not the Plague of the Guts, but of the Heart; not the Rickets in the Head, but the Pride of Life, *alias* Hypocrisy, *alias* apparent Prophaneness; fly as far from Licentiousness, as you do from the Formality of *Rome*. Woe be to the Profession of Religion, if your Profession should stand or fall to the Verdict of the World. O! let not those whom you must one Day judge, justly judge you now—Take heed of putting out the Eyes of Conscience, and then to make Apology
for

The Epistle Dedicatory.

v

for your Blindness; Conscience is God's Vicegerent, but it is not our Lawgiver; Conscience is our Guide, but the Divine Word is our Way; and there is no Excuse in following our Guide out of our Way.

4thly, Call not that Poison which is your Milk, and strike not those Breasts which once you stroked; say not the Preaching down of Sin is the Preaching up of the Law. Trample not those Ambassadors under your Feet, who have rejoiced to carry your Souls in their Arms to Christ; have not low Thoughts of them that have low Thoughts of themselves, and high Thoughts of Christ; that care not tho' they be accounted nothing, (who are yet something in your Eyes) that Christ, who is little esteemed in the World, may be All in All. But, if the Bridemen be despised, O! that the Bridegroom might be more honoured: O! that Love, which is denied to the Servants, might abundantly be given to their Master. I confess, it were better for many to have an hundred a Year to be silent, they so, instead of preaching Christ crucified, crucify Christ; in Preaching, they so wound and kill Religion in the Pulpit, where they should give it Life. While you endeavour their Downfall, forget not to pray for their Conversion; *Paul* was once a *Saul*. Let not therefore your Virtue be only in speaking against the Vices of others; it is an easy Matter to trample on those that are on the Ground already.

5thly, Take heed of the *Corinthian* Disease; I am for *Paul*, no, I am for *Apollos*, no, I am for Christ, as if we might not love Christ, and *Paul* and *Apollos* too: In the Primitive Times they (as in the *Acts*) kept together in Singleness of Heart—
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But O! that those now that have but one Head, had but one Heart.—O! that we did consider, that tho' *Paul* and *Peter* be in Heaven, yet that there are neither *Paulians* nor *Peterians* in Heaven; that Christ is not a *Calvinist* in the *Calvinists*, or a *Lutheran* in the *Lutherans*; but in those that are Believers amongst both Christ is All in All. God must scourge this Folly from us; his Children are wrangling, and we may expect that either he should separate, or correct us. O Lord! if Man's Apostate were thy Apostate, and Man's Heretick thy Heretick, and Man's Reprobate always thy Reprobate, Election to eternal Life would prove but a Fable, and all the World would be damned.—But when our Redeemer shall appear, he will not prefer one Opinion, and reject another, so much as prefer all true Believers, and reject all the Hypocrites, he being not the Lord of Opinions, but of Souls; not one Sheep that hath the Ear-Mark of Election shall be left out of his Fold, nor one Child that bears his Image shall either be kept or thrust out of his Family.

6thly, Remember that the Ordinances of Christ are not his Grave wherein he lies, but the Throne whereon he sits as King of his Church; that you should never be above Ordinances, until you are above Temptations; and that they lose not their Authority, because sometimes we miss their Influence; and that they are appointed not only to bring Men to, but also to build Men up in Christ: It is true they are the Conduit-Pipes, and we have no Comfort from them, unless Christ convey his Blood through them; the Ordinances are dead Creatures only to those that are dead in their Consciences, and are not alive in Christ; the Ordina-

nances

nances cannot work without the Spirit, and the Spirit (ordinarily) will not work without the Ordinances, tho' the Lord is Sovereign : Wherefore, Christians,, prefer not the Letter before the Spirit; neither oppose the Spirit to the Letter (as the manner of some is) lest in the End you prove neither for the Letter, nor the Spirit, but the Flesh. As ever you would be comforted by, take heed of scoffing at the Divine Spirit. Quench not the Spirit in yourselves, grieve it not in others. And,

· Lastly, Arise, and be on your Guard, and wait for the Coming of our Lord; for as it is certain, so it will be sudden. If it were the last Hour in *Paul's* Time, sure now it is the last Minute of that last Hour. O Lord! never was the Judge nigher to come, and never less Regard for his Coming. Believers, have we not Closets to mourn in? or rather, do not we want Hearts to mourn withal? Hath Christ cast his Cloak of Love over you, and said, Live? And will you not pity those that yet lie, as it were, dead in their Blood? If you have any Knowledge, advise; any Faith, pray; any Zeal, be courageous; any Wisdom, soberly wait; for the Coming of the Lord draws nigh. How can Christ wipe Tears from our Eyes, if we never wept for his Absence? or come to answer our Prayers, if we never pray for his Coming. Awake, awake, the Night is far spent; arise, the Day-Star is risen in the World; we have slept too long already: I pray, that when the Father comes, he may not find you, like Prodigals, out of his House; that when the Captain of your Salvation comes, he may not find you in the Trenches of the Devil, or of the World, a Lying,

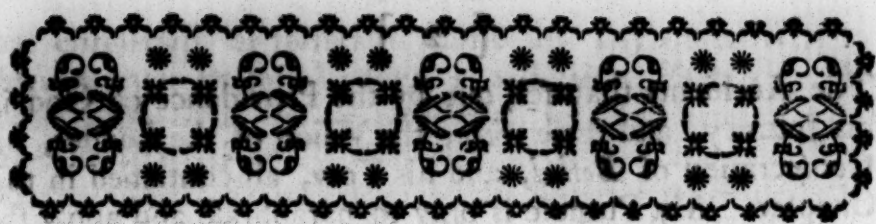
Lying, a Swearing, a Beating your Fellow-Brethren; for even to these monstrous Sins our Natures are inclinable. Pray, pray, that when the Judge comes, who is even at the Door, that you may not have your Accounts to cast up, when they are to be given up; judge yourselves, that you may not be judged. The Noise and News of the Bridegroom's Approach is at hand: Awake, arise, go ye out to meet him.

If these following Discourses may any way advantage you in your spiritual Watch against the Devil, they are yours, read them in Love, and may you be enabled to apply them; let them not swim in your Heads, but sink into your Hearts; and in your Prayers to the Throne of Grace, let him have a Room, who subscribes himself in our Lord Jesus a Friend to *Sion*.

1654.

FRANCIS RAWORTH

Let Angels now descend from thee,
O Lord! and with this Ladder flee
Abroad, and in their glorious Arms
Guard and safeguard it from all Harms,
That *Jacob's* Sleep and Dream may those awake
Who without *Jacob's* Dream his Sleep yet take.



Master R A W O R T H

O N

J A C O B ' s L A D D E R ;

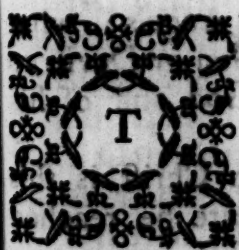
O R , T H E

P R O T E C T O R S H I P o f S I O N .



GENESIS xxviii. 12, 13.

And Jacob dreamed, and behold a Ladder set upon the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven, and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending on it, and behold the Lord stood above it.



HERE is a threefold Sense of this Vision, Literal, Allegorical, and Providential.

First, Literal: The History of *Jacob* consists of three general Parts. 1st, *Jacob's* going to *Padan-Aran*. 2dly, His Stay there. 3dly, His Return from thence. In his going to *Padan-Aran*, the Motives which induced him to go thither are recorded ; which were, to take a Wife of his own Kindred, and that he might withdraw himself from the Fury of his enraged Brother.

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The Accidents that fell out by the Providence of God in his Journey, and these were, the Vision of the Ladder, his Consecration of *Bethel*, and his Vow, all contained in this Chapter. My Purpose is only to paraphrase and apply the Vision of *Jacob's* Ladder. I pray the Lord to open this Vision to our Eyes to see it, and open our Hearts to understand it. Four Things might perplex *Jacob* in his Journey, that he should leave his Country, that he should forsake his Friends, that he might fall into Poverty; lastly, Solitariness and Want of Company; wherefore the Lord seasonably appears to *Jacob* in this Vision: "Though thou leavest thy Country, yet be content, I will not leave thee; and as for thy Friends, be not troubled, I am thy Friend; can you mend yourself, *Jacob*? And for Shame fear not Poverty, if the Word of thy God may be taken, East and West shall be at thy Command." Let *Jacob* say, "Certainly I shall never see God want, and wherefore should I be dismayed, seeing the Lord saith, I will never see *Jacob* want; and let not *Jacob* fear to be alone, for Angels shall travel with him, and that which is Security enough, *Jacob* shall have in Company not only the Angels of God, but the God of Angels." The Ladder is the Journey of *Jacob*, the Angels ascending and descending, his Royal Attendants going to and returning with him from *Padan-Aran*; the Lord stands on the Top of the Ladder as guiding and governing all. *Jacob*, I am persuaded, never had a sweeter Night's Lodging than at this Time, when the Stones were his Pillow, and the Heavens his Canopy, when Providence made his Bed, and Angels rocked the Cradle. How pleasant is it to consider! Angels guard *Jacob*, God guards the Angels, and God guards *Jacob* with Angels; what Ground then hath *Jacob* to fear either Men or Devils to disturb him, when he hath a Guard of God and of his Angels?

Secondly, An Allegorical Sense; and so Christ is this Ladder, (*John i. ult.*) by his Divine Nature he reached to Heaven, by his Human to the Earth, his Incarnation being a Commerce between Divinity and Humanity; the Steps of this Ladder are either the Genealogy of Christ, or the successive Works of his Redemption. *John x.* He
that

that climbs up, or thinks to climb up, any other Way to Heaven than by this Ladder, is a Thief. *John* xiv. He is the only Way for Satisfaction, for Justification, for Sanctification, the only Way from God to Man, and from Man to God. Every poor sensible Sinner hath Liberty to ascend these Stairs; and the righteous Pharisee shall never enter the Star-Chamber of Heaven at a Back-Door: Every Man, by Nature, sees the Necessity of some Ladder or other to climb up to Salvation by; the *Mahometan* makes the *Alcoran* his Ladder; the *Jew* makes the Temple of the Lord his Ladder; the carnal Protestant makes his Charity his Ladder, and the Papist hath his Ladder also: There is a red Ladder by the Blood of Christ, but they will have a white Ladder by *Mary's* Obedience; this they account the easier Way: Methinks these Men mistake *Jacob's* Ladder, yet something like it is, for they are in a Dream as *Jacob* was; these are all rotten Ladders, and the Climbers have rotten Hearts, so continuing,

Thirdly, A Providential Sense; and thus I shall handle this Vision; the Ladder signifieth the Divine Providence, and in this Ladder we have many Things observable.

1st, The Variety of Providences in the many Steps thereof. The Providence of God hath indeed but one End, yet it hath divers Ways to that one End; every living Creature hath four Faces and four Wings, to signify the several Appearances and swift Execution of Providence, *Ezek.* i. 6. It is a difficult Thing to take the Picture of Providence at this Time in the World, it maketh and hath so many Faces, let our Eyes be never so exact in observing, and our Hands ready in describing its Ways. The Locks of the Spouse in the *Canticles* are black and curled, black for their Obscurity, and curled for their various Intricacy. There are not so many several Countenances of Men, as there are Dispensations of God; and it is as rare a Thing to find Dispensations, as Men, of the same Complexion. In Heaven God will appear to the Saints in one glorious Form; but now, as it was said of an Emperor, that every Day he put on a Suit, so it is the Lord's Honour to apparel himself in changeable Robes: The Imbroidery of Providence is made up of divers

Colours; *Sion* is not always in one Condition, nor the Soul always in one Frame; sometimes Christ frowns, and sometimes he smiles; sometimes he casteth down, sometimes he lifteth up; sometimes the Church of God is in the Wilderness, sometimes in *Canaan*; sometimes on the raging Sea, sometimes in her Harbour. The Lord keeps his People from Infection, by leading them into divers Airs; black and bloody Providences set off the Wisdom and Faithfulness of our God the better. Standing Waters corrupt and breed noisome Creatures, but running Waters are pure and preservative. Every new Day brings with it a new Temptation, and we shall never be experienced Soldiers till we are tried at all Sorts of Weapons. We must not look on the scattered Lines of Providence, but tarry till God hath made a Conclusion; never say Providence scribbles, till you have seen the whole Copy. Princes Letters, we say, ought to be read thrice; let us consider the Ways of God, and we shall never censure them.

2dly, In this Ladder we have the seeming Uncertainty of Providence: The Ladder is partly above the Clouds, and partly visible in the Air; as the Spirit, *John* iii. blows where it listeth, so God in his Works worketh how he listeth. It is observable, that usually of old, when God appeared in the Tabernacles, a Cloud ushered in his Presence. All the World is in the Light to God, but God is in the Dark to all the World. Sometimes the Lord walks so plainly in his Works, that he that runs may read; that the dim-sighted'st Christian may say, this is the Lord's Walk, and this is the Lord's Work: At other Times, he wraps himself in a Cloud, and overcasteth *Sion* with Darknes, that the poor Children of God cannot tell where to find their Father, that they can but guess at his Footsteps, knowing not which Way to march, for their Leader hath hid himself. *Pompey* the Great said, when the Scales weighed down on *Cæsar's* Side, that there was a Mist on the Eyes of Providence; but indeed the Sun shone clearly, and the Mist was on his Eye, that he could not see it. I confess, in this Age, it is easier to know what particular Things in Providence God will pull down, than what he will set up. We often imagine there is a Disorder

Disorder in God's Works, when, if we mind it, the Disorder is in our own Imagination; we know not how to believe, and we fancy the Lord to be at a Stand, as not knowing what to do: But we must take heed of charging the Lord to be out of his Way, when only he is out of our Sight.

3dly, In this Ladder we have the seeming Contradictions of Providence: The Angels ascend and descend the Ladder; one Providence seems to go one Way, and another Providence seems to go another Way. Sometimes the Cloud in the Wilderness seemed to carry *Israel* immediately to *Canaan*: Now for *Canaan*, might *Moses* and *Aaron* say; and on a sudden the Lord wheels about, and *Israel* turns Faces toward the *Red Sea*, as if he intended they should never see *Canaan* more. How plainly hath the Lord led *England* for some Years toward a Reformation! The Saints have encouragingly said one to another, Certainly we are within two or three Years Journey of the New *Jerusalem*; have at the Scarlet Whore of *Babylon*; now for the Building of ruinate *Sion*. But the Lord hath seemed to cry, Face about, and follow me yet longer in the Wilderness. And some of the Saints conclude, we are never like to go forward, we shall return to our Leeks and Onions; the Conversion of Souls visibly goes backward, and not forward. Some Years ago Hundreds came out of the Devil's Kingdom, into the Kingdom of the Gospel; but now many fly from the Colours of Christ visibly, and run into the Devil's Quarters again. The Lord seems to seal up the Hardness of Men's Hearts, and to say to the Womb of Grace, Give forth no more, let no more Sinners be changed from Darkness to Light in *England*. Well might *Solomon*, *Prov. xxx. 19.* compare the Church to a Ship in the midst of the Sea; which, as the Prophet speaks, now even mounts up to the Heavens, and anon descends, as it were, to Hell. God sees our Works in our Wills, but we cannot many Times spell out the Lord's Will by his Works: Who can trace the Lord in his Travel, or find out the Work or Walk of the Almighty in the World? The Texts of Providence are as difficult as the Texts of the Scriptures; there are as high

high Contests about Providence, as about Predestination; and it is as hard to reconcile the Works of God, as to reconcile his Word, though there is a real Concordance and Harmony in both. Be not over-righteous, says the Preacher, *Ecclef. vii. 16.* Can a Man be too righteous? Rather, we think, he should have said, Be not too prophane; but as one Diamond cuts another, so one Scripture opens another. Ver. 15. I have seen a just Man, as just as *Abel*, perish in his Righteousness, and to lose his Life, because he would keep his Conscience; and on the contrary, I have seen a wicked Man, as wicked as *Cain*, to prolong his Life, and to have the World at Command: But yet carp not at Providence, let the Lord be down before you think to lift him up; enter not into the Chair to offer Knowledge to God about his Works. There is no Reason that the Lord should give Man a Reason of all his Ways; he often wills a Change, but never changeth his Will. God may retreat in his Providences as to us, and undo all he hath been doing in *England* these many Years, and make *Sion* put on her mourning Apparel, and yet not be either unconstant or unfaithful; though I hope better Things. For it is observable, that Providence in the main is never excentrical, and in the main is never retrograde. The Lord oft looks backward, but never goes backward. He led *Israel* forty Years about in the Wilderness, and yet never carried them back to *Egypt*. *Abraham* is promised a Son, and a numerous Offspring; but, as if Providence had forgot itself (to us) *Abraham* is commanded to offer up *Isaac*; and whereas he might have objected, Lord, thou art wont to call for Oxen to be sacrificed, and dost thou require me to sacrifice my Son? Thy Word saith, I must not kill, and thy Mouth saith, I must kill: And Lord, thou hast promised to multiply my Seed, and now thou callest for my *Isaac*; how can the Branches grow, if the Stock be cut down? And yet *Abraham* obeyed, winking, and putting his Hand into the Lord's Hand, following him, though Providence, as it were, crossed the Promise. We now have, as the Prophet speaks, a Wheel in a Wheel; so I trust, 'ere God hath

hath done with *England*, we shall have, as the *Rabbi* speaks, a Miracle in a Miracle.

4thly, In this Ladder we have the Independency of Providence: The Ladder, we see, is only reared and supported by God; it is not a crooked Ladder, but stands upright towards Heaven. It leans not on the Mountains of Men, nor Palaces of Kings. Many quarrel and find Fault with the Ladder of Providence; but this Ladder shall never fall down before Man, or to Man. The Prophet undertakes the Challenge, *Isai.* xl. 15. Who hath been the Counsellor of God, or hath taught the Almighty? The Wise King of *Arragon* (or rather the Unwise) was so foolish, as to think he could have made the Creation better, if he had been of God's Council; and some Men think there are Errata's in the Volume of Providence by their Murmurings, and would fain be a correcting the Lord's Copy, and amending the Lines of his Government in the World. Methinks false-hearted Man is like flattering *Absalom*, who would insinuate to the People Neglects in his Father's Government: There is no Man deputed of the King to do Justice, and that he was able to guide *Israel* in a better Order. But *John* xv. the Church is compared to a Vine, and God will have it lean on himself, and not to be supported by the Poles and Policy of Men. It is observed, that the weakest Women have often the strongest Children, and that the Lord hangs the heaviest Weights on the smallest Wires. The Stone in *Daniel* is cut out of the Mountains without Hands: The Gospel and *Sion* are neither framed nor forged by Man, both are the Handy-work of God; as there was no Concurrence of Man's Power to the Generation of Christ personal, so there is no Concurrence of the Wisdom of Man to the Generation of Christ mystical. *Cicero* fell in with *Cæsar*, when *Pompey* was defeated; and it is no Dishonour for Man, routed in his Way, to fall down to God. Man must lean on God, but God will never lean on Man.—But let *Sion* remember, that her Cause is not so good, but the Strength of her Protector is as great to maintain it: There is nothing that God doth by the Creature, but he can do without the Creature; rather

rather than *Sion* shall fall, the God of *Sion* will not stand on Miracles.

5thly, In this Ladder we have the Extent of Providence. The Ladder is set upon the Earth, and the Top of it reached to Heaven. Providence extends to all senseless and irrational Creatures, both in their Preservation and Government.—There is as much Need of a Divine Wisdom to preserve, as there was of a Divine Power to make the World. There is a Necessity not only of a privative Influx from God, that is, not only that he does not destroy his Creatures, but of a positive Influence to maintain the Creatures in being. *Job* vi. 9. If the Lord take away his Hand, *Job* would fall, not only to the Ground, but also to his first Principle of nothing. *Mithridates*, a General, knew all the Names of all the Soldiers in his Army; the Heavens are the Lord's Hosts, and they in all their Ranks and Orbs are known and kept by the Lord of Hosts. *Cincinnatus's* Honour was at the same Time to hold the Plough, and the Helm of State. The Lord made as well the least Worm on Earth, as the most glorious Angel in Heaven; and it costeth the Lord as many Words to make a Worm, as to make an Angel, for all was done with a Word. It is no Disgrace for the Lord to walk up and down by his Providence, and overlook all his Creatures; the Baseness of any Creature no more defiles God, than a Dunghill Vapour infects the Sun-Beams.—God is great in the greatest Creatures, and he is great in the smallest Creatures. It is to be feared, that those that at present question Providence, upon the same Account may ere long deny the Creation.—But the Lord can no more be absent from his Creatures, than cease to be their Creator, nay, than cease to be, *Psal.* cxlvii. 9. According to the old Observation, God is present in Heaven by his Glory, in his Church by his Spirit, in Hell by his Justice, in the Earth by his Providence, though it be not full, for God is every where in his Essence.—God is in small Things great, not small in any; his even Praise can neither rise nor fall; he is in all Things one, in each Thing many; for he is infinite in one and all. The least Creature hath something of God in it, and the best Creature something of

of nothing. Again, In their Government: In God, as the Apostle saith, we have our Being, we are his Creatures; in him we live, by him all Things are preserved; in him we move, all Things are at his Beck and Command: Every Creature, as it hath a Being from God as its Maker, so it hath an Order from God as its Governor, and that Order is warlike, whereby all Creatures are mustered, and trained, and serve under the Colours of the Almighty. Look into *Egypt*, and you find a Band of Frogs march into *Pharaoh's* Bedchamber. Look on *Herod*, and God sets his Vermin on him, and all the King's Guard cannot master the Lice. God hath Hornets for the *Hivites*, Mice for the *Philistines*, Rats for the Prelate, and a Fly for the Pope. When God hath Service to do, he can never want an Army to do it; all the Creatures stand ready pressed to receive the Word of Command: If he bids them go, they go; if he bids them come, they come.

Again, Providence extends towards all rational and intellectual Creatures, Men and Angels, good and bad, generally and specially; of which last I shall discourse, as it is exercised for the Good of *Sion*. This Ladder of Providence is exercised on Man for Good. *The Answer of the Tongue*, (Prov. xvi. 1.) *is from the Lord*; we cannot speak a good Word without the Influence of the Spirit of God, much less can we do a good Work. I dare not say, that the Graces, as Faith, Hope, flow formally from God, yet certainly they flow efficiently from God; that is, though it be not God that believes, but Man, yet Man would not believe without God. It is the Tree that brings forth Fruit, yet the Tree would not bring forth Fruit, were it not for the Light of the Sun, and the Dew of Heaven. It is certain, that Man may repent when he has a Will, but it is the Lord that must give him that Will to repent—For Man cannot repent without his Will; but not in the Power of Man. It is a Truth, Man cannot repent, because he will not repent; and also, that Man will not repent, because he cannot. The Conversion of the Soul is supposed to be as considerable a Work, if not a greater, than the Creation; for in the Creation God had no Ad-

versary: The Light did not say, I will not be created; the Earth did not say, I will not be formed: But in the new Creation, Sinners labour to prevent (as much as in them lies) the Conception of Grace, take down Antidotes against Salvation, and study how to defeat the Spirit of God, and make its Works abortive. God, when he comes, finds the House not only empty of Grace, but filled with Lusts, and the strong Man up in Arms; not a milk-white Paper, but he finds the Devil to have been scribbling, and the World to have been scribbling. Angels may knock at the Door of a Sinner's Heart, but God only can open it. The Body is not so much at the Command of the Soul, as the Soul is at the Command of God. *Without me ye can do nothing, John xiv.* The Lord opened the Heart of *Lydia*. Man's Heart is God's Lock, and not Man's Wisdom; but the Spirit of the Lord is the Key that must unlock it.—It is God's Prerogative to make, and it is the Royal Flower of his Crown to give a new Heart. *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh.* Under the Praises of Nature lurk the Enemies of Grace.

2dly, This Ladder of Providence reacheth as far as wicked Men and Devils; and that four Ways:

1. In this Ladder there is a preventing Providence. *Pharaoh, Exod. xiv.* resolves on *Israel's* Ruin; he will destroy them, ay that he will; but how was it that he did not destroy them? *Ezekiel xxix. 4.* The Lord put an Hook in his Nostrils, and a Bridle in his Jaws. The dark Lanthorn of *Faux* is famous; the Match was ready to give Fire to have blown up all, but God wet the Powder. The dark Side of the Lanthorn was to Man, the light Side toward God.—It was a good Man's Contemplation on this Ladder, Lord, thou hast pardoned those Sins I have committed, and those Sins which by thy Grace I have not committed. How many Souls had never gone into Heaven (to our Apprehension) if God had not carried them by the Gates of Hell? How many Sinners had been undone indeed, if they had not been undone

undone in their own Sense? Let God's *Jacobs* lie at the Foot of the Ladder, and admire what Hardness of Heart hath God prevented; what an hard Heart hath God softened! How miserable in Sin had I been, if God had not had Mercy on me? and how miserable, notwithstanding all my Sense of his Love and Power over my Corruptions, should I be, if yet God should leave me to myself? But this is the Support of poor Sinners: *Whom the Lord loves, he loves unto the End, &c.* God is not only to be admired for bringing Good out of Evil, but for preventing Evil, and doing Good.—And so in a publick Sense, when the Overthrow of Religion is determined at Man's Council-Table, it is not determined at God's Council-Table: Men's Designs are not so deep, but the Lord's Designs are deeper; and though Satan's Enterprises are in the Dark to us, yet they are in the Light to God. God often blows up and undermines the Malice of Men, for his Children, who sometimes neither feel nor hear the Blow. O Lord, how often are we delivered from visible Dangers? but how oftener from invisible Dangers? Remember for ever, that the Devil and Men may often level their Ordnance against *Sion*, but they shall never do Execution, till God say, Give Fire.

2. In this Ladder there is a permitting Providence. The Devils are kept in Chains, as *Jude* speaks, in Chains not only of Justice, but also of Providence, that they can neither torment the Body, or tempt the Soul, without Commission or Permission from God. God did not allow, yet he suffered the Treachery of *Judas*, and the Cruelty of *Pilate* toward Christ, *Acts* ii. 23. The Apostle chargeth Christ's Death on them, and yet brings in the Foreknowledge and Counsel of God; the Father delivered the Son, the Son delivered himself out of Love; *Judas* delivered Christ for Money, the *Jews* crucified Christ out of Malice; so that in the same Tradition God is to be magnified, and Man condemned, because, in the same Thing which they did, the Cause was not the same for which they did it. God permits Weeds in his Garden, and Tares in his Field: Why, may some say, doth not God prevent the sprouting and growing of such Blasphemies and Errors as

range up and down, and rage in *England*? How, say Unbelief, can the Lord be tender of his Flowers, his Saints and Truths, and yet be content to see such Thorns and Weeds to grow about them? Remember, that God is not bound to do all he can; (and how could God be Almighty, if he did all he could?) and that when the Wheat is ripe, as *Luther* speaks, the Husbandman will burn the Tares. If a Man should find Fault with the Shadowing of a Picture, it would be answered, Let not the Cöbler go beyond his Last, for the Dimming sets off the Bright, and the Art of the Painter could not be perceived without Diversity of Colours. A Father holds a Lion in Chains, the Child trembles for Fear, lest the Lion should devour him; but the Father suffers the Child to tremble, but will not suffer the Lion to devour: The Saints in *England* are afraid, for the Lion of Hell roars (indeed our Sins have both lengthened his Chain, and opened his Mouth); but let them consider, the Lion is not so powerful, but their Father is as pitiful, and that God that suffers the Lion to roar, will not suffer the Lion to tear. Satan, tho' politick, cannot slip his Collar; tho' powerful, cannot break his Prison: The Devil hath Men to be his Prisoners, but the Devil himself is God's Prisoner. Providence binds Satan over to the Peace, to his quiet Behaviour: Christ hath the Keys of Hell at his Girdle, Hell is under his Conquest, and therefore under his Command, *Rev. xx. 2.* An Allusion to Conquerors, who having taken a Fort, the Keys are presently surrendered to them. This Ladder of Providence reaches as far as Hell, and extends to the utmost Line of the Devil's Kingdom: Satan cannot enkindle one Fire in *Sion*, if Providence did not suffer him to go up and down to gather Sticks. The whole Creation, Men and Devils, though they are not all under the Protection, yet they are within the Precincts of Providence; and let us not murmur at God's permissive Providence, but consider God judgeth it more for his Glory to bring Good out of Evil, than not to suffer Evil to be at all; and God would never suffer Evil to be, if he could not bring Good out of it. The Almighty doth not approve of all he permits; and therefore let none undertake to reprove him

for what he permits, there being nothing that is permitted, which shall not in the End prove for *Sion's* Comfort, and his Glory.

3. In this Ladder there is a restraining Providence : Thus far shall the Designs of Men and Devils go, and no farther ; that is the authoritative Dialect of the Almighty God. God will shake the World, *Nab. iii.* as a Fig-Tree ; Men shall neither have Leaves to cover their Nakedness, nor Fruit to satisfy their Hunger : The Lord can make that Saints in believing not to care (as we say) a Fig for the Towers or Powers of the World against Christ. The *Egyptians*, like ravenous Wolves, would fain have been worrying the Lambs of God when they came out of their Bondage ; but the Lord held them in, that they did neither rend their Fleeces, nor suck their Blood : The Lord (according to the Proverb) here truly held the Wolf by the Ears. The Saints are the Apple of God's Eye, *Zech. ii. 8.* Now we know the Eye is the tenderest Part of the Body, and the Apple is the tenderest Part of the Eye. It is remarkable, how the Eye is secured by a Trinity of Providences ; by Tunicles, that Sweat annoy it not ; by the Eyelids, that the Dust hurt it not ; by the Eyebrows, that it may be kept from Blows or Strokes. There was Care on Care, Providence on Providence, Tunicle on Tunicle, for *Sion's* Good. O ! that the Glory of the Lord were as tender to us as our Salvation is both tender to, and tendered by the Lord. It is prettily observed, *Gen. xi. 4.* in the Building of *Babel*, Go to, say the *Babylonians* ; Go to, saith God ; let us build a Tower, say they ; let us go down and see it, saith God ; that we may get a Name, say they ; that we may scatter them, says God. Thus God words it with them, and confutes their Folly from Point to Point. I believe there are such *Babels* building in the World, and I am persuaded the Lord will shortly come down and see them ; the Pride of Man shall flow to such a Tide, and then it shall ebb ; Errors and Blasphemies shall even lay the Neck of the Gospel on the Block, but shall not cut it off. Let the Devils raise Storms, and bluster with their Winds round about the House of God ; let the Men of the World

World bow down their Backs, and set to their Shoulders, they shall never overthrow it ; they shall neither prove themselves *Sampsons*, nor the Saints *Philistines*. *Sion*, like a Bottle, may be dipped, but it shall never be drowned : God will never suffer such an Enemy to invade *Sion*, that either he could not keep out, or will not conquer. Satan may be the Executioner, but God is the Judge ; and the Executioner cannot lay on a Stroke more than the Judge appoints. Fierce Lions roaring for their Prey, and then *Daniel* thrown in, and *Daniel* yet remains alive ! There was a Lion in the Den was *Daniel's* Friend, or *Daniel* had been slain. Among a thousand Lions I would not fear, had I but only *Daniel's* Lion there.

4. In this Ladder there is an ordering Providence : The Ladder of Providence extends from Heaven to Hell ; let Men climb never so high, and dig never so deep, Policy goes not so far, but Providence goes farther. If the Lord suffers a Poison, he knows how to bring a Cordial out of it ; the Devil can turn Cordials into Poisons, God can turn Poisons into Cordials, nay, make Poisons Cordials. He suffers his Children to burn their Fingers in the Candle, to keep them from burning their whole Body in the Fire. He, like a Nurse, suffers his Children to reel and fall, that they may cry for his Arm to hold them up, and learn to walk by his Almighty Strength, and under his Elbow. There is nothing so firm, but Providence sustains it ; nothing so small, but he regards it ; nothing so evil, but he can overcome it ; nothing so vile, which serves not for his Glory ; nothing so wrongful, which executes not his Justice ; nothing so Enemy-like, which fights not for him ; nothing so much against him, but hits the Mark at which he aims. It was a good Speech, if well understood, of a good Man once, that he was as much beholden to God for his Infirmities, as for his Graces. If *Peter* had not fallen, he had fallen. The Saints sometimes fall, that when they rise they may stand the faster. *David* cut off *Goliath's* Head with *Goliath's* Sword. Our Lord Jesus hath often beat the Devil in his own Kingdom, and with his own Weapons. Many have shot with the Devil in his own Bow, as *Eve* (*Gen. iii.*)
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by disputing with him; but never any, except Christ, ever outshot the Devil in his own Bow, as appears in two famous Instances. The first of the first *Adam*, *Gen. iii.* the Devil was a fallen Angel, and he envied that Man should stand; *Adam* was the Representative of all Mankind; if *Adam* had stood, we had stood: Now also, says the Devil, all the World falls before me, if I can but make *Adam* fall; he makes the Onset, gives the Bait, *Adam* swallows it, and is poisoned; the Devil laughs, as we say, in his Sleeve, exults, as if all the World was his: *Adam* is arraigned by God, the Devil is a ready Witness against him, but before the Sentence was pronounced, the Sin is pardoned; the Messiah puts in Bail. The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpent's Head, though the Serpent bit the Woman's Heel; but the Serpent had but one Head, and the Woman had two Heels: I cannot tell which most to admire, the Disease, or the Remedy. Christ is the Glory of the Church, the King of Saints. Sure I am, we had never heard of free and distinguishing Grace, if Man had not fallen. The second Instance is of the second *Adam*; the Devil sets on the Captain of our Salvation: O! thinks the Devil, if I can but destroy the Shepherd, the Sheep are mine. *Judas* betrays his Master, the *Jews* crucify their King, Christ is laid in the Grave, Satan danceth and triumphs, as if he had got the Victory: But, Satan, stay the Bells, thou hast won the Field, but Christ hath won the Day: Christ ascends from the Grave, marcheth through the Devil's Kingdom, and receives a Crown from the Father, as Victor over Men and Devils, who could neither prevent his Resurrection, nor Reign. O the Wisdom of Providence! If Christ had not been bound, we had not been freed; if he had not died, we had died for ever: This was Satan's Master-Piece, and yet it was his Overthrow. Providence brings the Wheel over all Designs against *Sion*, *Prov. xx. 26.* Satan was the first Fool, though not the only Fool in the World. Providence is usually exercised in Contraries; it is the Divine Method to humble, that he may exalt; to kill, that he may make alive; to bring Light out of Darkness, and Hell out of Heaven. We wonder

wonder oft why God suffers those to reign, who make Christ to suffer, and will not suffer Christ to reign; little considering, that the Lord oft makes the Earth to help the Woman, and loves to strike straight Strokes with crooked Sticks. He makes wicked Men, though they be as Chaff, yet to cover his Wheat; and though they be as Straw, to bear up his Ears. If *Paul* had not been such a Persecutor, *Paul* had not been such a Professor. *Joseph's* Brethren aimed at his Ruin, but God aimed at his Advancement: All Things work together for *Sion's* Good, *Rom. viii. 28.* Before *Sion* is built, here lies a Piece of Timber, there lie the Bricks, and there lies the Mortar, all Things seem to be in a Confusion; but tarry till the Lord hath done, and you will see no Disorder, but Order; no Confusion, but Beauty. All Things, you see, not only work together (the Word in the *Greek* is compounded) look not only on God's Way, but on his End; what God hath joined together, let no Man separate—Let Man use what Means he will against the Church, God hath still the Security of the End. If his Wisdom prevent not Disorders, his Power can order Disorders. Men may bend their Bows, and shoot their Arrows against God, but all in vain; for it is impossible that ever this glorious Archer should once shoot over or short, the Archer and the Mark being one and the same: Man too often puts Darkness for Light, but the Lord only can and will bring Light out of Darkness.

3dly, This Ladder is conversant about all Evils and Actions, all evil Actions personally and publickly. This Ladder of Providence reaches as far as Sin. Providence, by which generally I understand the Execution of God's Decrees in Time; sometimes possibly the Decrees of God, and God decreeing, is conversant about Sin four Ways.

1. Providence foresees Sin. The Lord foresaw the Treachery of *Judas*, and yet simply did not fore-ordain it; and yet the Prevision of God is infallible. Did not *Judas*, may some say then, sin necessarily? I answer, God foresaw he would sin, as he foresaw; but God foresaw that he would sin freely, therefore in that Sense he sinned freely. Because we sin, therefore our Sin is fore-known;

known; not therefore we sin, because it is foreknown. God foretold the Infidelity of the *Jews* to Christ. He foresaw their Sins, not his own; the *Jews* committed a Sin, which God compelled them not to, who is displeased with Sin; but only foretold that they would do it, because nothing is hid from his Foreknowledge. Foreknowledge in God is as Memory in us; Memory presenteth us with Things that are past, so Prescience presents to God Things that are to come: Now as Memory is not the Cause why Things past were done, so God's Prescience is not the Cause why future Things shall be done; God foresees and foreordains those Things that are good, but only foresees, but foreordains not, those that are evil.

2. Providence extends farther in withdrawing the Influence of Grace, *Psal.* cv. 25. *Deut.* ii. 30. xxix. 4. God gave them not an Heart to understand: Now when Providence withdraws its Aid, the Creature falls necessarily, and yet freely. The Sun is not the Cause of Darknes, for it does not positively infect the Air with Darknes, but only removes its Beams; so when the Spirit of God, who blows where he listeth, and is arbitrary in its Influence, withdraws its Influence of Light and Life, the Soul is presently possessed with Darknes and Sin; or as the Staff falls to the Ground, not because it is thrown down by the Hand, but because it is forsaken by the Hand. God is the Author of Man's Condemnation, for as a Judge he punisheth Transgressions against his Law; but he is not the Author of Man's Corruption. If the Nurse lends not her Hand, the Child presently falls; now the Cause of falling is not the Hand of the Nurse, but Impotency and Weakness in the Child. God throweth down none, but raiseth up many fallen; God healeth many, woundeth none. The Principle of our falling (*James* i. 13.) is in ourselves, but the Principle of our standing is in God.

3. Providence extends farther, in moving the natural Faculties of Man. He preserves in Man, what he hath given to Man; both Nature, which is the Principle of natural Actions, and the Will, which is the Principle of voluntary Actions; by his Power determining their Motions, and freely inclining them to any indeterminate

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Actions:

Actions : Wherefore one and the same Action may be both good and bad, according to the Difference of Principle ; good in the Kind, as from God and common Nature, but evil in particular, as from the inbred Corruption of Man ; for the immediate Cause of every Sin is the Will of the Sinner. In every sinful Action there are two Things, the Act, and the Defect ; God is the Author of the Act, but not of the Defect : As in the striking an untuned Harp, the fingering is from us, but the jarring is from the Instrument. In God we move ; without the Aid of Providence, *Cain* could not have stretched out his Arm ; but to turn so good a Gift of God to so ill a Purpose, as to kill his Brother, was the proper Sin of *Cain*. God may remove Impediments of sinning, he may propose Objects in themselves indifferent, as Threatenings, *Rom. vii. 8*. And how easily doth Man fall when God goes from him, and Temptation comes to him ?

4. Providence farther extends about Sin. God wills that Sin be ; God wills not the Nature, yet he wills the Being of Evil. *Amos iii. 6. Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it ?* To affirm that God is the Author of Sin, impairs the Justice and Goodness of God ; for he can no more be the Author of Sin, than one Contrary is the Author of another, than Light is of Darknes, or Good of Evil ; it is not the God of the World, but the God of this World, is the Author of Sin ; and to affirm that God only permits Sin, seems to impair the Government and Providence of God ; for God doth not suffer Sin to be without his Will. *Judas* hath a Will to betray his Master : I will not, says God, stop his Design, but I will draw a Preservative for Man's Salvation out of that Poison. The World shall know, that out of the unnaturalest Treason that ever the Sun beheld, I can work the most glorious Effect. God found the Will of *Judas* earnestly running to Sin ; he run of himself, God staid not behind, but ran with him, but to another End ; *Judas* and God run, as it were, in the same Race ; *Judas* to satisfy his Lusts, God to declare his Glory. If God did not willingly suffer Sin to be, of Necessity Sin could not be : The Lord fulfills his own good Purposes by the wicked

wicked Purposes of others : Man practiseth Sin, and God punisheth Sin with Sin, so as God is neither to be blamed, or Man excused : God hardened *Pharaoh's* Heart, but, says the Text, *Pharaoh* first hardened his own Heart ; when Man hardens his own Heart morally, it is just with God to harden it judicially. Let *Pharaoh* alone, says God, let him take his Pleasure and Pastime, and when he hath hardened his Heart by Malice, I will harden it in Justice, I will set a Seal to his Ruin. They shall be given over to believe Lyes, 2 *Theff.* ii. 11. A dreadful Woe against Sinners in these Days of Gospel Light ! As if the Lord should have said, Sinners, I have set before you in the Divine Word my Love, and my Son's Blood ; I have set before you the Truths, and only Way of Salvation through Faith in Christ ; I have said, this is my Way, and the only Way, and it is your Wisdom to walk in it : Now because you have refused to bear my Yoke, and to entertain the Gospel, there shall come false Prophets, and say, Heaven is but a Fable, and Hell-Fire was but a politick Invention to keep Men in Awe, and you shall believe them : There shall come some like Angels of Light, though they are Devils incarnate ; and they shall with a seeming Mortification cry down real Mortification, and with a plausible Conversation preach down Preaching, and tell you, that a strict Life and evangelical Repentance are out of Date, and required only to scare Men from their Freedom, and you shall believe all this. *Jer.* iv. 10. *Rom.* xi. 8. God now sends us, as the *Jews* of old, a Spirit of Slumber ; and because they will not be given up to Truth, God gives them over to Error. It is one Thing to have Error, and it is another Thing to be given over to Error, which is not only to have and hold, but to be had and held of Error : He that will be unjust, let him be unjust still. — So God, as a just Judge, punisheth our Barrenness and Impenitency under the Means of Grace, with giving of Hundreds over to the noisome Opinions and monstrous Blasphemies of this Age. It is well for God's *Jacobs*, that the God of *Jacob* stands at the Top of the Ladder, or else the Gospel would no longer stand, but fall. God knows how to bring Glory
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out of all this Disgrace : What more heinous Act than the Treachery of *Judas* ? And yet, take away the Treachery of *Judas*, and you take away the Cross of Christ ; and take away the Cross of Christ, and you take away the Sinner's Salvation. Again : Some Men, I confess, are accessary to their Ruin, and, as we say, die before their Time, that is, *their* Time indeed, which according to the visible Face of Nature they might have lived, but not before God's Time. God hath the four Keys, of the Clouds, the Womb, the Heart, and of Death, hanging only at his own Girdle. Man's Spirit is the Candle of the Lord, *Prov.* xxi. 27. He puts out some Candles as soon as they are lighted, others when they are half wasted, and he suffers others to consume, by old Age, to a Snuff. Providence hath turned up a Glass for every Man, and Man can neither stay the Sands of his Glass a Minute from running, nor turn it up when it is once out. When God's Servants have done their Work, Providence lets them go to Bed. O ! how sweet it is to behold Christ in every Cross, and God on every Ladder ! *Job* saw God on this Ladder, *Job* i. Who says not, The Lord hath given, and the *Chaldeans* have taken away ; the Lord hath enriched me, and the Devil hath robbed me ; but, as if he never heard mention made either of the Devils or the *Chaldeans*, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.* *David* saw God on this Ladder, *Psal.* xlv. 12. Like a good Child, he fathers the Rod on God his Father : " Thou hast cast off, thou hast cast down." When God's Rod was on his Back, he puts his Hand on his Mouth, and his Mouth in the Dust. *Luther* saw God on this Ladder, when he observed, though the *Christ-Cross* be no Letter, yet he learned more by it than all the Letters of the Alphabet ; and that God never sent him on any special Errand or Business, but he first sent his Mind by some special Affliction.—Lord, (says one Christian, lying like *Jacob* at the Foot of the Ladder) I am thy Vine, and let me rather bleed than wither ; I am thy Apple-Tree, let me rather be lopt to grow, than cut up to burn.—Lord, (says another) frown on me, rather than not to look on me ; let the Lord take me into his Hands and correct me,

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rather than that I should have nothing to do with God, or he should have nothing to do with me. How many Souls have Reason to say, If the Lord had not ploughed me with Afflictions, and dunged me with Reproaches, what barren Ground had I been? How had I wandered, if the Lord had not sent his Dogs to fetch me to the Fold? I had been cast away, if I had not been cast down.—The Lord often writes angry Epistles to his Children; yet observe, still at the Bottom of the Letter he subscribes, *Your loving Father*.—Again: *I create Light, and I form Darknefs*, Isa. xlv. 7. Sin is Man's Creature, and Afflictions are God's Creatures; every Affliction bears the Image of its Maker, and God is not ashamed of his own Handy-Work. Sinful Man is the meritorious, but Providence is the efficient Cause of Evils: Man is the Cause of moral Evils, God of penal Evils in the City, *Amos* iii. 6. Again: Wars and Judgments are God's Troops, he is their Generalissimo, they move according to his Orders; he sounds his Trumpet, and beats his Drum, and all the Plagues and Punishments of Providence are in Arms; when God saith charge, they charge; when retreat, they retreat. O! Sword of the Lord, how long before you are quiet? Here was a Cry to the Sword, but the Sword of the Lord answered, You must speak to the General himself, I am at his Command, *Jer.* xlvii. 6. Not many Years since we cried out, O! the Sufferings, and Alarms, and Field-Fights, when will you cease in *England*? But they never ceased, till God bid them cease. It is the Honour of a King to discharge the first Piece of Ordnance against the Enemy; the Lord, I am sure, had the first Honour of beating the Alarm, and sounding the first retreat in *England*. Man may speak of Peace in, but God only can speak Peace to a Nation. In *Rev.* vi. 10. they cry, *How long, Lord?* They knew God had the time in his Hand, and he only could tell how long. They cried not to the Tyrants, How long will ye persecute? How long will ye oppress the Saints? But to the Lord, How long before thou come to revenge? O! say any, if it had not been for such and such Men, we had never had Wars; and if it had not been for their Ends
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and Designs, we had had an End of our Troubles ere now; as if Providence were but a By-Stander, or a Looker on, while Men played their Games, or acted their Parts. —Again: In the Primitive Times, the persecuting Emperors would have hewn down the Lord's Ladder; in the *Marian* Days they would have burned down the Lord's Ladder; in 88 they would have blown up the Lord's Ladder; and Politicians in the World would, in their Policies, with their Shoulders throw down the Lord's Ladder: But though the Wind and Storms blow to and fro, and round about, yet the Ladder stands where it did, and Christ is in the Road-Way to his Kingdom. That Man fears God but as Man, that fears Man as God. When the Prayers of Saints are crossed, and the Enterprizes of their Enemies succeed, remember *Jacob's* Ladder, and the Vision of Angels.

- “ God's Trials are like Bellows, Satan's the Blower ;
- “ Blows out false Faith, makes true ones blaze the more ;
- “ Fear not then, little Flock, the greatest Ill
- “ Your Foe can do's to scratch, he cannot kill.”



N. B. According as this meets with Acceptance, possibly *Jacob's* Wrestling with the Angel may follow.

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